

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-23, 28-31, and 33 are currently pending in the application. By this amendment, claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 32. Claim 32 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants expressly reserve the right to file the subject matter of claim 32 and other original claims in one or more continuing applications. New independent claim 33 is added herein. The new claim does not add new matter to the application and is fully supported by the original disclosure. For example, support for the new claims is provided in the claims as originally filed, at Figures 2-11, and at paragraphs [0006], [0041], and [0049], of Applicants' published application (U.S. Pub. No. 2007/0028547). Reconsideration of the rejected claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Allowed Claims

Applicants appreciate the indication that claim 32 contains allowable subject matter. By this response, claim 32 is re-written in independent from by amending claim 1 to incorporate the features of claim 32 and canceling claim 32. Accordingly claim 1 should be allowed, as should claims 2, 4-23, and 28-31 which depend from claim 1.

35 U.S.C. §102 Rejection

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,086,599 ("Meyerson"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants do not agree that Meyerson anticipates claim 1. Nevertheless, in order to advance prosecution, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the features of allowable claim 32. Therefore, claim 1 should be allowed and the rejection of claim 1 as anticipated by Meyerson is moot.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the §102 rejection of claim 1 in view of Meyerson be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejection

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-12, 14-20, 24, 28, and 30-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being unpatentable over WO 00/20705 ("Martensson '705") in view of U.S. Pat. No. 4,599,841

("Haid"). Applicants note that claim 32 is listed in the initial statement of this rejection at page 3 of the Office Action. However, no explanation of a rejection of claim 32 is provided. Moreover, claim 32 is indicated as allowable at page 12 of the Office Action and in the Office Action Summary (Form PTOL-326). Accordingly, Applicants assume for purposes of this response that claim 32 is allowable and that the inclusion of claim 32 in paragraph 4 of page 3 of the Office Action is a typographical error. Clarification is requested.

Claims 1, 13, and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,763,643 ("Martensson '643") in view of Haid. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being unpatentable over Martensson '705 in view of Haid, and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 2,863,185 ("Riedi"). Claims 21-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being unpatentable over Meyerson. Claim 29 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being unpatentable over Martensson '643 in view of Haid, and further in view of Riedi. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants do not agree that any proper combination of the applied art renders the claimed invention unpatentable. However, in order to expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to include the features of indicated allowable claim 32. Therefore, independent claim 1 should be allowed, as should all of claims 2, 4-23, and 28-31 which depend from claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the §103 rejections of claim 1, 2, 4-23, and 28-31 be withdrawn.

New Claim


Claim 33 is added by this amendment and is believed to be distinguishable from the applied art at least for the following reasons. Claims 33 recites a combination of features that is not taught or suggested by any proper combination of the applied art, including a device comprising: a first upward facing surface; a second upward facing surface connected to, and vertically offset from, the first upward facing surface by a first step; a first downward facing surface; a second downward facing surface connected to, and vertically offset from, the first downward facing surface by a second step; a resilient lip extending upward from the second upward facing surface; and another resilient lip extending downward from the second downward facing surface, wherein at least one of the resilient lip and the another resilient lip compresses

toward a center of the device and then springs back out from the center of the device when the boards are connected by the substantially horizontal displacement; and horizontal locking of the boards is effectuated by respective tips of the resilient lip and the another resilient lip resting against edges of the respective grooves.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all of the claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed. Applicants hereby make a written conditional petition for extension of time, if required. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-2478.

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas GRAFENAUER



Andrew M. Calderon
Reg. No. 38,093

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Roberts Mlotkowski Safran & Cole, P.C.
P.O. Box 10064
McLean, VA 22102
Phone: 703.584.3270
Fax: 703.848.2981